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Brian Williams/ Somebody get this guy a jet

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"If you don't like St. Paul, you've got a screw loose," said NBC's "Nightly News" anchor Brian Williams at the Xcel Energy Center on Wednesday. He's been in town since Tuesday covering the Republican National Convention and even made time for a guest appearance on the "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." (He compares his excellent rapport with Stewart to "watching Olympic fencing by two amateurs with sharp swords and no idea what they're doing.") Here's some more of what he had to say during a sit-down chat at the X.

On what the 2008 RNC will be remembered for: "That book remains yet to be written. I think there will be multiple subplots. I think the plots go by the names of Gustav, Palin, McCain. ... I think Fred Thompson delivered quite a speech on Tuesday night. That's the great thing about these things, we can get all the advance text we want, but we don't know what's going to happen."

On his job: "I get to hold my opinions close. I get to cast exactly one vote in November with all my fellow citizens. I view it as a challenge and my professional role is to try to deliver it all straight up, balls and strikes, no preference. I put such a premium on fairness especially this time of year. Every word I write for the broadcast this afternoon, every word I write tonight — I scour it, I measure it, I go over it. You want any opinion, you know where to get it. There're a couple of cable channels where you can

hear it, there're a few Web sites, a few editorial pages. I don't think there's any shortage of that."

On his great chemistry with Jon Stewart: "We do have that. I compare it to two brothers very close in age forced to share bunk beds. He knows that I won't 'go there,' and his job is to get me to 'go there' and to goad me. I look forward to it. People don't come up to me and say, 'We loved your in-depth segment on "Nightly News" last Tuesday,' they come up to me and say, 'I love when you're on with Jon.'"

On the possibility of taking it on the road with Stewart: "I would love to. Anytime, anywhere. He's a good person, he's smart, and I like his show as a viewer, and it was a fun dynamic in that studio."

On his hectic travel schedule: "We did the math — 38,486 miles in eight weeks including two Pacific crossings, three Atlantic crossings and 10 overseas cities. ... Why don't I have a jet? Tell me why I don't have a jet? I need my own jet — that's the lesson." Amy Carlson Gustafson can be reached at 651-228-5561.

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